

AMERICAN ANNECDOTES



L to R: The Murrells: Jared (holding Abigail), Joy & Nathan (blue shirt). The Maydells: Joseph, Les & Linda. The Whites: Noah (far left with tie), Titus (light blue suit), Levi, Gloria (holding Rose) & Sam . The Harbigs: Indi, Melody (holding Ellie), & Jeremy (holding Mela). (Indi is tearful because she has to say good-bye to her cousins.)



The above picture says a lot – we have been so blessed! Our physical family is so very important to us, and we deeply appreciate the opportunity to be with them, especially my 88-year-old mother (far left), seen here with my grandmother’s sister, 95-year-old “Aunt Bunny.” However, our friends also mean a lot to us – and we were truly excited to get to see each and every one of you. As we get older, and as our children move all over the USA, we get more and more friends – and it is impossible to see you all. For those we didn’t see, we truly missed you and hope to see you maybe next time.

Our heart’s desire and prayer for our family is that they remain walking in the ways of the Lord. My very favourite part of our reunion was when we sang hymns and worshipped God together. It had been two years since we were all together – it was a very special 2 ½ days, thanks to Sam and Gloria’s hospitality! Sam & Gloria live just north of Birmingham. Sam works full time as a preacher for the Selfville church of Christ, but since it is a small congregation, he supplements his income by roofing houses, fixing and reselling cars and houses, etc. Jared & Joy live in Knoxville, where Jared, who now has his PE, works as a mechanical engineer. They attend the West Knoxville church of Christ. Jeremy & Melody still live in Tampa and attend the congregation at Temple Terrace. Jeremy is a business analyst for a company that does cancer research. All of our sons-in-law are hard workers and wonderful providers for their families -- physically, emotionally and spiritually – and we thank God for them. We are also thankful for our daughters, whose careers at the moment are “kids,” and our son Joseph who lives in Houston and attends the Southside congregation at Pasadena. He is a flight controller for the International Space Station and has also started his own business selling reasonably-priced weather balloon kits to anyone, especially schools, wanting to explore the edge of space: (www.highaltitudescience.com). The goal is to educate and interest young people in the fields of math and science by having them take pictures and do experiments at the edge of space. Our grandchildren are growing up so fast – two in first grade, two in kindergarten. Nathan and Indi have started violin lessons – the third generation. Hopefully there will be some third-generation preachers too!





It has been my dream, since sometime back in elementary school when I first heard of it, to see “Old Faithful.” Basically the last week of our time in the USA was spent with Joseph and his friend ☺ Kristen on a camping trip in Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. Old Faithful pretty aptly describes our friendships with so many people – faithful friends although we don’t see them all the time. Then, when we do see them, it’s wonderful! Old Faithful erupts, on average, every hour and 40 *minutes*. Some friends we saw on this trip, we had not seen for close to 40 *years*!

If you’re ever in the Grand Tetons, be sure to take the shuttle boat across Jenny Lake and hike down Cascade Canyon. The hike has multi-faceted beauty: Lake vistas, picturesque streams, waterfalls, animal life – and of course, the amazing mountains. On this trip we also experienced friendships like that -- the multi-faceted beauty of hospitality: warm welcomes, great food, kinship of spirit and amazing love.



The amount of water flowing over Mammoth Terraces, as well as its direction, changes daily. Whenever you visit, there will be something new you’ve never seen before. That’s how it is with our visits to the States – every time, new friends await! Each new friend on this trip has been formed and transformed by the water of life – and so they have informed, challenged, encouraged, refreshed and blessed us!



Mountain streams are always inviting and refreshing, blessing the plants and wildlife all around them. But sometimes, unexpectedly, they break forth in an extra overflowing of blessing – a waterfall. Without that unexpected extra overflowing of blessing, this annual trip to our family and friends would not be possible. For those of you who make it possible, we want you to know that we always remember you and thank God for you.



The thing that struck me most about Yellowstone was its *uniqueness*. And so, each of you, dear friends, both old and new, and family too! -- have something unique about you that we value very much. Such a variety of interests and hobbies, such a plethora of talent, such depth of wisdom – and *especially* the spiritual bond that we share – we praise God for such a wonderful gift and give thanks to Him that you are a part of our lives. May the Lord richly bless each one of you.

With love, Linda (and Les) Maydell